

**Remarks by Ambassador Harry K. Thomas**  
**As prepared for delivery**  
**Signing ceremonies for the USTDA Grant Agreement for First Gen Mindanao**  
**Hydro Power**

- Mr. Francis Puno, President and Chief Operating Officer of First Gen Corporation,
- Mr. Mark Dunn, USTDA Regional Manager,
- Honored Guests,

*Magandang umaga.*

I am honored to participate in this signing ceremony. Today marks the beginning of what will prove to be a fruitful partnership between the United States Trade Development Agency and First Gen Mindanao Hydro Power.

This partnership is yet another example of the U.S. Government's commitment to renewable energy and infrastructure development in Mindanao. First Gen's support of hydropower in Mindanao has the potential to accelerate economic growth and bring much-needed energy to the region. We are pleased to support First Gen in this endeavor with this grant totaling over 16 million pesos.

This agreement will also promote trade and establish long-term economic linkages between the United States and the Philippines. The end result is more jobs for both Filipino and American workers.

President Aquino has stressed the importance of infrastructure development in the Philippines – especially in Mindanao. This grant is an early gesture of support from the United States to advance the President's goals. I hope that it soon will be followed with additional programs funded by the Millennium Challenge Compact, once that is approved. This is a historic moment of opportunity for the Philippines, and we want to be partners in your success.

I congratulate both USTDA and First Gen on completing this agreement and wish you the very best in your future endeavors.

*Mabuhay.*